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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable BOB CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the State of Pennsylvania.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Loving Lord, give our Senators an extraordinary measure of grace to accomplish Your will. As they work under the duress of time and pressure from diverse interests, give them wisdom to make ethical decisions. Be with their staff members who run the offices and provide the information to make responsible decisions. Be with those who process the mountains of business in and out of the cloakrooms. Be, also, with those who transcribe the debates for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Lord, bless those who monitor parliamentary order, schedule, and voting records. Protect the men and women who provide security at the doors, on the floor, and on the street. Strengthen all who are a part of the Senate's support system.

We ask this in the name of He who is the light of the world. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read a communication to the Senate.

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the State of Pennsylvania, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CASEY thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today there will be a period of morning business for an hour. As normally provided, the time is equally divided and controlled with the majority controlling the first half, Republicans controlling the final portion. When that time is up, we will have to see what we can do.

OBSTRUCTIONISM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, those who watch C-SPAN and people who are watching us in other ways are many times well versed in Senate procedure. People would note today that we didn't come into session until 12 noon. With all the many things we have to do, why are we taking the morning off, so to speak? We have so much work to do. But yet most people's work day is half completed and we are just starting.

The reason is we have another example of obstructionism. The reason we had to come in late today is because we have an extremely important piece of legislation that is being marked up in a committee. The Environment and Public Works Committee has been scheduled to begin to mark up a crucial

piece of legislation today, a bill that will take a major step forward in the fight against global warming. If there were ever an occasion when we had to unite as a country and as a world community to fight, it would be against the scourge of global warming which is taking place everywhere. You can't listen to the news without hearing about something global warming has affected. Yesterday on public radio there was a wonderful piece about Finland, how the glaciers are melting in Finland.

Under Senate rules, any Member has the power to object to a committee meeting after the first 2 hours after the Senate is in session. That is why we had to start the Senate late today, so that committee could go forward with its markup so they can hopefully report a bill to the floor by 2 o'clock this afternoon. Had we started at 9, they would have had to stop at 11 because we were told that Republicans would object to the hearing going forward.

Mr. McCONNELL. Would the majority leader yield?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. McCONNELL. There were no objections on this side. I think maybe the leader was anticipating an objection that did in fact not exist.

Mr. REID. That could be the case, Mr. President. We started at noon today because under the rules anyone can stop us from holding a hearing beyond that time and we were told that was what was going to happen and that is why we did this. It is very easy for people to say we didn't do it. Of course they didn't do it, but had the meeting started at 10 o'clock, they would have done it. We were told that is what they were going to do. It is easy now to come here after the fact and say we wouldn't have done that.

We can see from what is taking place in the committee, about the amendments being offered to try to stop this

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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